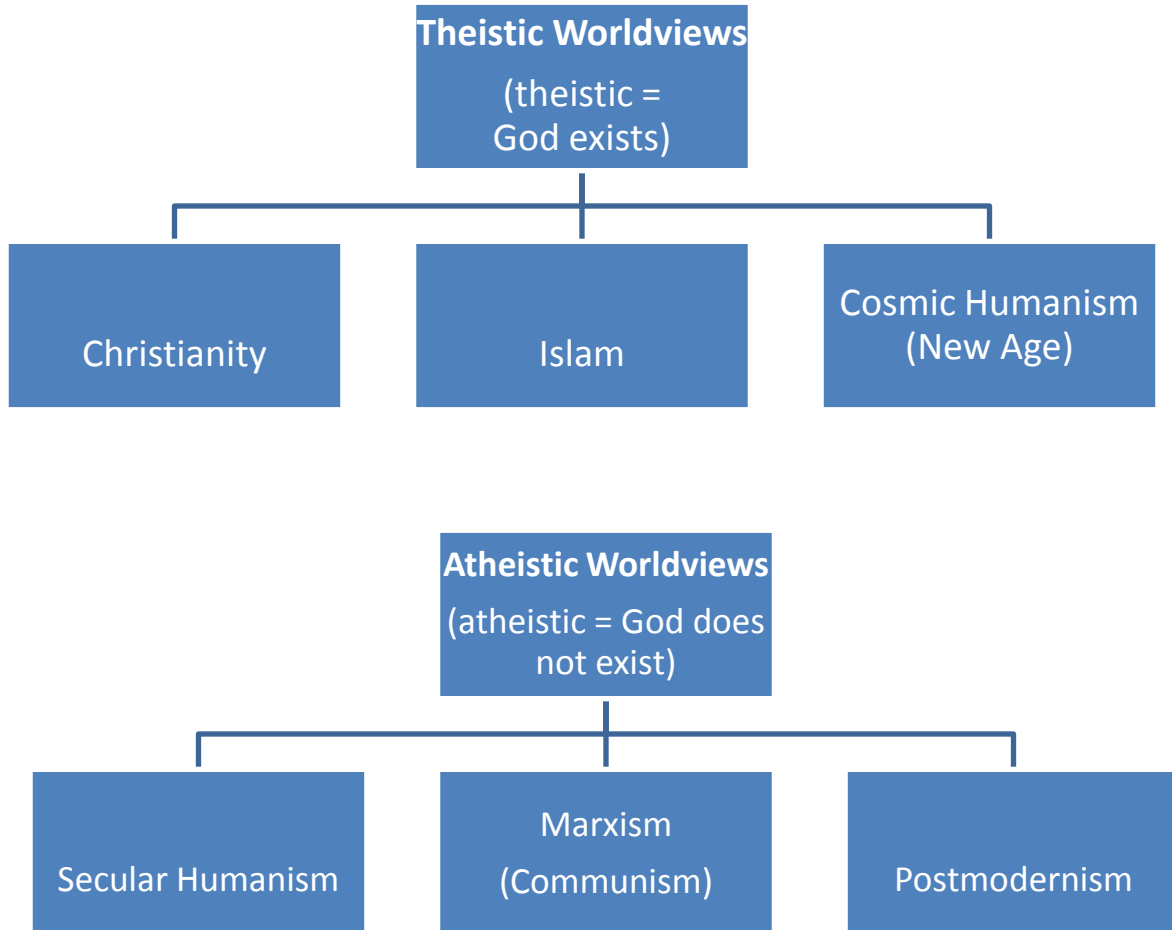


## UT Theology Unit

Theology = the study of God (Greek 'theos,' *God* + 'logos,' *study/treatment of*)



### Christian Theology

1. God is **supernatural** (beyond the natural)
2. God is **trinity** (three-in-one—called *Trinitarian monotheism*)
  - a. Father
  - b. Son
  - c. Holy Spirit
3. God is **knowable** and **wants to be known**
4. God has **feelings** and **emotions**

Examples (there are many more we could list)

- a. **Sorrow**

- b. **Anger**
  - c. **Compassion**
  - d. **Jealousy**
  - e. **Satisfaction**
5. God is **sovereign** (He does not have to seek permission or approval)
  6. God is **moral** (in the struggle between right and wrong, he is always right)
  7. God is **longsuffering** (He puts up with a lot of junk in this world because he has granted us free will and allows to reap the consequences of it.)
  8. God is **patient** (This is different from longsuffering. Being patient, he can wait.)
  9. God is **faithful** (He is always there.)
  10. God is **powerful** (In fact, he is *omnipotent*—all-powerful.)
  11. Sources of knowledge about God—revelation
    - a. General—God’s communication about his presence and power (examples)
    - b. Special—God’s more specific communication about his character and will (examples)
  12. How does one “please God?”
    - a. Confess sinfulness and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
    - b. Ephesians 2:8-9—For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.
    - c. Learn to live in accordance with the principles of the Bible

### Islamic Theology

1. God is **supernatural** (beyond the natural)
2. God is **one** (Unitarian monotheism)
  - a. There is no trinity
  - b. Christians are viewed as *polytheistic* (believing in more than one God)
  - c. *Shirk*—the one unforgiveable sin in Islam—associating partners with God
3. God has revealed his will through **prophets** (all of whom taught Islam)

- a. Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus were all prophets who gave revelations from God which were recorded as Scriptures (mainly the OT & NT). They spoke to specific people in specific times.
  - b. Muhammad was the last and greatest prophet.
- 4. **Similarities** between Islamic and Christian theism
  - a. God exists
  - b. God created everything.
  - c. God has revealed his will through prophets.
  - d. All humans are accountable for sin.
- 5. Islam views itself as the **fulfillment** of Christianity just as Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism.
- 6. Sources of **knowledge**
  - a. **Qur'an**—Islam's holy book. Muslims believe it to be the most accurate and final revelation from God. It was revealed to Muhammad—the final prophet of humanity.
  - b. **Hadith**—The recorded teachings, rulings, and actions of Muhammad as recorded by his early associates. Muslims believe they are inspired by God and are to be obeyed.
  - c. **Sunna**—The works of noted scholars of Islam (both Muslim and non-Muslim)
- 7. How does one please God?
  - a. Islam's **5 pillars**
    - i. **Confession of faith**—"There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet." (If a person makes this confession with a sincere heart and mind, then he/she is a Muslim.)
    - ii. **Prayer**—Muslims are expected to pray five times a day facing Mecca. On Fridays, Muslim men (and sometimes women) are expected to attend noon prayers at a Mosque.
    - iii. **Fasting**—This is done during the month of Ramadan. It involves abstinence from food, smoking, and sex during daylight hours.

- iv. **Almsgiving**—Muslims are to give 2.5% of their annual income to help the poor.
- v. **Pilgrimage**—All Muslims are expected to travel to Mecca once in their lifetime if their health and finances allow them to do so.

**Possible 6<sup>th</sup> Pillar**

- vi. **Jihad**
  - 1. The battle against temptation and sin for the sake of self-control.
  - 2. The battle against any and all who oppose Islam.
- b. There is no guarantee of salvation.

*Cosmic Humanist (New Age Movement) Theology*

- 1. **Pantheism:** All that exists is God; God is all that exists.
  - a. God is a cosmic **force** not a personal God.
  - b. This leads naturally to the concept of the divinity of the individual, that we are all Gods.
  - c. They do not seek God as revealed in a sacred text or as exists in a remote heaven; they seek God **within the self** and throughout the entire universe.
    - i. Each person is God (can get in touch with his/her **inner godhood**)
    - ii. Truth is discovered by **inner soul-searching** (meditation).
- 2. **Reincarnation:** After death, we are reborn and live another life as a human(?). This cycle repeats itself many times. You have certain challenges to face and overcome in this lifetime. If you don't learn your lessons this time, you'll get them again.
- 3. **Karma:** The good and bad deeds that we do add and subtract from our accumulated record, our **karma**. At the end of our life, we are rewarded or punished according to our karma by being reincarnated into either a painful or good new life. This belief is linked to that of reincarnation.
- 4. It seeks the highest attainment of **human potential**.
- 5. It is characterized by an **individual approach** to spiritual practices while rejecting religious doctrine and dogma.

### Secular Humanist Theology

1. Defining Secular Humanism
  - a. *Secular*—of or pertaining to **worldly** things or to things that are not regarded as **religious, spiritual, or sacred**; temporal (*temporal*—pertaining to or concerned with the **present life** or this world)
  - b. *Humanism*—the belief that humanity is the **highest of all beings** and truth and knowledge rest in **science** and **human reason**
2. Atheism—there is no God
  - a. The **supernatural** (anything outside of nature) does not exist.
  - b. “We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either **meaningless** or **irrelevant** to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God; nature not deity....we can discover **no divine purpose** or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become **No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.**” (*Humanist Manifesto II*)
  - c. Humanity is the **supreme authority**.
3. Sources
  - a. Humanist Manifesto I (1933)
  - b. Humanist Manifesto II (1973)
  - c. Humanist Manifesto III (2000)

### Marxist-Leninist Theology

1. Defining Marxism and Marxism-Leninism
  - a. *Marxism*

the system of **economic** and **political** thought developed by Karl Marx, along with Friedrich Engels, especially the doctrine that the state throughout history has been a device for the **exploitation of the masses** by a **dominant class**, that **class struggle** has been the main source of historical change, and that the capitalist system will inevitably (after the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat) be superseded by a socialist order and a **classless society**.<sup>1</sup> (*proletariat*—the **class of**

---

<sup>1</sup> "Marxism." *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. 01 Oct. 2009. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Marxism>>.

**workers**, especially industrial wage earners, who do not possess capital or property and must sell their labor to survive<sup>2</sup>)

b. *Marxism-Leninism*

The doctrines of Marxism as applied by Lenin (a founder of the Soviet Union) to the **building of Marxist nations**. With Karl Marx, Lenin called for a classless society in which all means of production would be commonly owned (communism). Unlike some Marxists, however, Lenin stressed **bold, revolutionary action** and insisted that a strong Communist party would be needed in a Marxist nation to direct the efforts of the workers. Lenin also argued that capitalist nations resort to aggressive moves as they decline and that Marxist nations must therefore be prepared for war. Eventually, rigid governmental structures will not be necessary<sup>3</sup>

2. Atheism

- a. **Humanity** is God. Humanity created God in its own image and created religion in order to worship itself.
- b. Mankind must **take control of reality** and **shape it** as he sees fit.
- c. "Religion is the sigh of the **oppressed** creature; the sentiment of a **heartless** world....It is the **opium of the masses**." (Karl Marx)
- d. Marxism is "positively **hostile** to all religion." (Vladimir Lenin)

3. Marxism and Atheism

- a. To be a Marxist means to be **atheist**.
- b. To be a good Marxist means **spreading** atheism.
- c. To be the best Marxist means to strive to **eradicate** all religious sentiment.

4. Sources

- a. *Communist Manifesto* (Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels)
- b. Works of Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Fredrick Engels, and Mao Zedong

---

<sup>2</sup> "proletariat." *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. 01 Oct. 2009. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/proletariat>>.

<sup>3</sup> "marxism-leninism." *The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005. 01 Oct. 2009. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/marxism-leninism>>.

## Postmodernist Theology

### 1. Defining Postmodernism

- a. Postmodernism is "post" because it denies the existence of any **ultimate principles** and it lacks the **optimism** of there being a scientific, philosophical, or religious truth which will explain everything for everybody—a characteristic of the..."modern" mind.
- b. Pre-modern to Post-modern eras
  - i. In the pre-modern era **God, revelation,** and the **clergy** were the ultimate sources about reality.
  - ii. In the modern era **science** and **reason** were the ultimate sources about reality.
  - iii. In the post-modern era the ultimate sources about reality are one's **culture, friends,** and **preferences.**
- c. A skeptical movement
  - i. Skeptical of **absolute truth**
  - ii. Skeptical of a **foundation for knowledge** (ultimately words are not loaded with meaning, they are merely interpreted by individuals)
  - iii. Skeptical of all **metanarratives** (big stories explaining all of reality)

### 2. Atheism

- a. Religious beliefs are merely matters of **personal preference** (as opposed to actually being **true** or **false**)
- b. *Religious pluralism*—we must be **tolerant** of all religious beliefs because no one religion can be true.
- c. Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are not tolerated because they dare to make **exclusive** truth claims.

### 3. Deconstruction

- a. **Words** and **sentences** have no inherent meaning.
- b. The author's **intent** means nothing in light of the reader's **interpretation.**

### 4. Sources—the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, Michael Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Richard Rorty